Proceedings of the Parish School Board

The Avoyelles Parish School Board met in special session on Tuesday, February 2, 1926, at the usual hour.

The following members were present:

J. M. Barham, President, R. G. Ducote, Vice-President, Hannon Sayes, L. O. Kelone, N. A. Couvillion, E. A. Coco, Leonard Chatelain, H. H. Haydel, L. L. Lemoine, L. E. Cox C. C. Gremillion and R R. Irion.

Absent: None.

6. Resolution by L. E. Cox, seconded by H. H. Haydel:

Be it resolved that beginning with the session 1926-1927 that no married lady shall be employed as teacher in the public schools of Avoyelles Parish.

Yeas: R. G. Ducote, N. A. Couvillion, L. L. Lemoine, L. E. Cox, H. H. Haydel and C. C. Gremillion

Nayes: Honnon Sayes, Leonard Chatelain, L. O. Kelone and R. R. Irion.

Not Voting: E. A. Coco.

Carried.

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J. M. Barham, President, Dr. R. G. Ducote, Vice-President, Hannon Sayes, N. A. Couvillion, E. A. Coco, H. H. Haydel, L. L. Lemoine, Dr. Leonard Chatelain, L. E. Cox, C. C. Gremillion, L. O. Kelone and R. R. Irion.

Absent: None.

2. Resolution by Hannon Sayes, seconded by Leonard Chatelain: Be it resolved that resolution No. 6 of the special meeting held on February 2, 1926, be repealed. A vote being called the following members voted:

Yeas: L. O. Kelone, Hannon Sayes, R. R. Iron, Leonard Chatelain.

Nayes: N. A. Couvillion, L. E. Cox, R. G. Ducote, L. L. Lemoine, H. H. Haydel, C. C. Gremillion, E. A. Coco.

The motion is therefore defeated.

3. Resolution by Hannon Sayes seconded by L. O. Kelone:

Be it resolved that resolution No. 6 of the special meeting held on Feb. 2, 1926, be amended to read that the married lady teachers of Avoyelles Parish will be employed only in the rural schools of the parish beginning with the session 1926-27. Carried.

MARRIED LADIES PERMITTED TO TEACH NI RURAL SCHOOLS

After much dscussion by the married lady teachers of Avoyelles before the School Board at its meeting of Monday, the ladies were successful in getting the board to reconsider the resolution recently enacted prohibiting the employment of married teachers in the schools. The new resolution, as adopted on Monday will allow the employment of married ladies in rural schools but not in the High Schools.

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Printed on Mar 15, 2021

Communication

Marksville, La., March 18, 1926
To the Editor of the Weekly News,
Marksville, La.

"I notice in a recnet issue of your valuable paper a letter from a resident of Cottonport in which it was stated a petition had been addressed to Superintendent Harris asking that the married women teachers be retained in the Cottonport Hi School.

This is an example of the age-old mistake of appealing from the decisions of a duly constituted local authority which is familiar with local conditions, to far-removed head that is not in a position to know the reasons, motives and coditions actuating the action of the local body. It is a case of belligerent minority propaganda favoring a cause based on the selfishness of a few, who have axes to grind. It is this kind of rubbish that is clogging the works of our Federal and State governmental machinery. It is a challenge to local self-government. Supt. Harris will not consider it.

The question of married women teachers was given careful and deliberate attention by the School Board of Avoyelles Parish, on two separate meetings. Their exclusion from the High Schools was not a hasty step. It was the result of a long, sometimes bitter experience. It is the part of wisdom to abide by the findings of those who know; whose business it is to know. There should be no exception in the application of a rule, based on reason, experience and mature judgment, unless absolute necessity demand it. No one will believe that there are not enough competent unmarried women, and men unmarried and single, to occupy the teaching positions now filled by married women who ought to be making a home for their husbands or children.

"Under our law the husband is still master and head of the family. Our law contemplates that the husband shall be and is the wage-earner for the family. So be it. Why permit the wife to swest and slave, neglect her home, shirk her matrimonial obligations, encourage her husband to be a drone, an idler, or worse.

"A married woman who teaches school cannot make a home. The home is the foundation of our civilization; it is the cornerstone of society. Strick at the home and you strike at everything we hold dear. Our public institutions should encourage home-making, rather than further a policy that sets an example of home destruction.

"In considering questions of vital public interest it is certainly best to proceed upon broad, fundamental principles; not upon grounds of temorary expediency, or narrow, selfish interest. It is in this spirit, as a citizen interested in public matters that I have written these words. It is with a desire to help towards the proper solution of this difficult question that I ask you to publish this letter.

"ABERT COX"

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Printed on Mar 12, 2021

Bunkie High's Principal Fired

By Robby McCorkle
(Town Talk Staff Writer)

MARKSVILLE, La. — Bunkie High School Principal Roy N. Stapp was fired Tuesday by the Avoyelles Parish School Board and an Alexandria teacher was hired to take his place.

Stapp, who refused to resign when asked in May, will be relieved of his duties effective June 30 of this year. The new principal will be Elvin McCann, the head basketball coach at Alexandria Senior High School.

Hired along with McCann to coaching positions at Bunkie High were two other ASH teachers, Howard Benton and Rickie Tyler. Benton will serve as head coach and Tyler will be his first assistant. Also hired as an assistant coach Tuesday was Kenneth Dixson.

Stapp said today in a phone interview with The Town Talk that he will appeal the school board's dismissal decision and in fact has already filed suit with U.S. Dist. Court in Alexandria. The suit was filed Monday, according to the Bunkie High principal, naming Spears and each school board member as defendants.

Although he is not tenured, Stapp said he was given a contractible letter of intent by Spears which constitutes a contract in Louisiana. He said he received a letter from the superintendent dated March 18, stating his service for the 1973-1974 school year had been satisfactory.

Stapp pointed out he is filing the suit because he was denied a hearing on the charges. About the charges, the principal said, "I don't think they are contingent upon my competency but rather because I've spoken out about personnel at school."

School board president Dr. Don Hines read the staff's recommendation to relieve Stapp as principal which included a long list of supporting reasons for doing so.

Among some of the charges against Stapp are lack of academic and administrative leadership, lack of organized classroom teacher supervision as it is related to instructional programs, failure to cooperate with the central office staff and school board members in solution of problems and place-

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Elvin McCann: Hired as new principal of Bunkie High School.

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Bunkie High's Principal Fired

(Continued from Page One)

ment of personnel and failure to cooperate and foster good community-school relations with certain parents, business leaders and officers of senior clubs.

Other more specific allegations cited by the staff include Stapp's discouragement of a football coach from accepting the head coach and athletic director's job at Bunkie High by his "uncooperative attitude and harsh tone of voice," questioning of the authority of the school board member in the solution of a Quarterback Club athletic staff problem and his "rude and discourteous" actions concerning the Band Sponsor's Club.

The recommendation for dismissal, signed by Dr. Charles Spears, superintendent of schools, also states "I have met on three occasions during the past month with Mr. Stapp and have discussed the necessity of his resignation. His attitude remains steadfastly uncooperative in this regard. Consequently, ... I recommend that he not be reemployed ..."

The conflict between Dr. Spears and his staff and Bunkie school board members came to a head last month when board member Don Roy charged Stapp with causing Bunkie High to lose a coach. This allegedly occurred when Frank Miller, an assistant coach at Franklin High, called Stapp seeking confirmation that he would be the head coach next year at Bunkie. Miller was told to come talk to Stapp personally about the job.

Miller construed this to mean Stapp did not want to hire him and refused him the job although Stapp contended he was busy at the time and could not talk on the phone.

Roy's Letter

Roy, who was out of town Tuesday night due to a death in the family, left a letter with the board president which stated he was in agreement with the staff's recommendation for dismissal "for the betterment of Bunkie High School."

Roscoe Dunlap of Effie cast the only nay vote while Dr. James Childress and Mrs. Verdie Lemoine, both of Marksville, abstained.

Asked by Dr. Childress if the allegations have been documented, Spears replied, "They can be substantiated."

When asked how many could be, Spears answered, "Some have been and others can be."

The school board hired three other persons to fill federally-funded staff positions in Avoyelles Parish.

Appointed to the intra-school liaison position was Mrs. Betty Hayward who needs four credit hours for certificiation in counseling. She will work with problem students who are threatened with suspension or who have been suspended.

Hired as a teacher aide resource person was Walter Lemoine, the athletic director and head coach at Moreauville High School. His duty will be to train and supervise 130 reading resource persons in the parish.

Marksville High School teacher Willis Fuqua was chosen mathematics resource person for Avoyelles Parish. His salary will be furded by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I program.

Executive Meeting

The three were chosen during an executive session from which the public was barred. The board members, at the suggestion of Hines, voted on the applicants for each position in the closed session to determine their preferences and announced their nomination for the positions upon reconvening of the open session.

All three positions are funded for one year but may be discontinued after that time by the federal government.

Also during Tuesday's meeting, Sylvan Tassin gave a presentation on the parish's Career Opportunities Program which trains teachers through practical classroom teaching experiences for four years.

Tassin said six young people have graduated with teaching diplomas from Northwestern State University who would otherwise have not been able to go to college. The six received their training without leaving Avoyelles Parish.

According to Tassin, two more persons will graduate in August and six more in December. The six who already have graduated, he said, are currently working in the Avoyelles school system.

Teachers enrolled in the COE program must complete 142 semester hours to get a degree, seven more hours than the regular college student majoring in education at college.

The board voted to delay until the next school board meeting the advertisement for bids on milk to be furnished to public schools for the 1974-1975 school year.

The decision to postpone advertisement for bids was prompted by board member Buster Rozas who suggested a delay pending the outcome of legislation in Baton Rouge which might affect the price of milk.

Other Action

In other action, the board accepted several bids affecting schools and school supplies.

Bacon Mobile Homes of Simmesport was awarded the contract on a house trailer for an air-conditioning — refrigeration unit with a bid of $3,695.

Contracts on $1,525 of home economics equipment were awarded to Gremillion Appliances of Marksville, Lemoine's Household Appliance Center of Bunkie, NASCO of Wisconsin, Sam's Electric Center of Simmesport and Sunbeam Appliance Co. of Chicago, Ill.

Brodhead Garrett, Paxton-Patterson and Woodward Wright Co., Ltd. were the low bidders on industrial arts equipment and supplies. Money to purchase the equipment comes from revenue-sharing and NDEA Title III funds.

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Printed on Mar 12, 2021

Bunkie Principal Fired Again

By Ron Grant
(Town Talk State Editor)

MARKSVILLE, La. — Former Bunkie Senior High School Principal Roy Stapp was not present Thursday when the Avoyelles Parish School Board completed its dismissal hearing and fired him for the second time.

Eight of the nine school board members sitting on the dismissal hearing panel voted to dismiss. There was one abstention.

The vote came at 7:30 p.m. with neither Stapp nor his attorney Paul Kidd in the board meeting room here.

Kidd walked out on the hearing after midnight the night before following a marathon 13-hour session, calling it a "farce."

Mrs. Jeannette Knoll, assistant district attorney representing the board, said at the opening of Thursday's session that Kidd had offered a motion to adjourn the hearing in a telegram sent to Dr. Charles Spears, school superintendent.

She said he was also filing the motion with U. S. Dist. Judge Nauman Scott but that the judge had not intervened to stop the due process hearing for Stapp. Mrs. Knoll advised the board to continue with the hearing as "ordered by Judge Scott."

Board members voting for dismissal were Mrs. Genevieve Chenevert, R. A. Rozas, Fernand Chatelain, Roscoe Dunlap, Jessie Mayeaux, Floyd Lacour, Eddie Rabalais, and Dr. James Childress. Dr. Don Hines and Don Roy had recused themselves.

Mrs. Verdie Lemoine abstained from voting saying that she would not vote because witnesses for both sides were not heard.

At the time Kidd walked out of the hearing the board was still presenting its witnesses. Kidd had called 26 witnesses for the defense.

The motion to dismiss was offered by Rozas saying the issue had been dragging on long enough. Roscoe Dunlap seconded the motion.

Dr. Childress suggested that each member explain his reasons for voting for or against dismissal noting the number of charges leveled against Stapp.

Rozas opposed requiring the explanation but said each member could do so if he wished.

Childress said he voted against Stapp because of the charge of misusing the available certified teaching personnel at the school. He said this charge was amply rebutted by Stapp's attorney.

After the vote Rabalais squared off against the two reporters present.

"I, for one am tired of being antagonized that we are afraid to face an issue in public. We faced this issue in public and I am proud to be part of the board," Rabalais said.

The board had refused a suggestion by Dist. Atty. Eddie Knoll that it deliberate the matter in private as would a court jury.

However, there was no discussion of the charges by

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Printed on Mar 12, 2021

Bunkie Principal Fired Again

(Continued from Page One)

the board members themselves during the final moments after the last board witness was called.

The final witness was board member Don Roy.

Roy said he recommended the dismissal of Stapp after the principal allegedly tried to block the hiring of new athletic coaches for the school.

"In my opinion Mr. Stapp had made definite efforts to undermine our efforts to find coaches for Bunkie High School," Roy said.

He described the incidents following the firing of Coach Floyd LeBleu and the resignation of three other coaches from Bunkie and his and Dr. Hine's subsequent efforts to find replacement coaches.

"I would say this is the straw that broke the camel's back," said Roy noting that he knew of other problems Stapp was having with faculty and parents in the school.

However, Roy said, he was still prepared, before the coaches incident, to recommend the rehiring of Stapp. He described the principal as a "disciplinarian and a strong man."

Roy said Stapp refused to attend a meeting with three coaches and followed saying he feels Stapp would have attempted to block any new coach proposals by he or Dr. Hines.

Roy said that when Stapp took over as principal in 1972 the school had racial and disciplinary problems. The school had been closed for several days the year before his arrival because of a "race riot."

When the disciplinary problems eased, Roy said, Stapp's effectiveness lessened.

The only other witness Thursday, was Bunkie teacher Ward Nash Jr. He said Stapp threatened to put pressure on his department if he helped another teacher, Malcolm Sharp, who was critical of Stapp.

Nash charged also that Stapp threatened him for communicating with school board members "over his head".

"He said if I were at Bunkie High School by July 1 he would see how rough he could make it on me," said Nash.

Lacour asked if Stapp ever carried out these threats. Nash said, "he felt Stapp would have since he was in a position to do so."

After the vote Roy and Hines returned to their positions on the board. Hines suggested that a registered letter informing Stapp of his dismissal be sent.

Hines said the issue was ended this time "once and for all I hope."

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The Bunkie Record

One Section | Bunkie, Louisiana 71322, Thursday, May 29, 1980 | 16 Pages

Four take top awards at BHS graduation

Madeline Robert, Thomas Townsend, Beth Holland and Mercedes Markey received three honors apiece Friday night during Bunkie High's commencement exercises for the 92 members of the Class of 1980.

The celebration was the 77th in the history of the school, but the first in the new location on the Evergreen Highway. A standing, room-only crowd filled the walls of the new gym.

Miss Robert, the class valedictorian, did not receive an award until the fifth one was given. But she captured one of four $250 Armand Scholarships, won the $100 Rotary Award, and received the Bunkie Belle (American Business Women of America) Scholarship. In addition, she received a scholarship to LSU-A, her fourth and last honor of the evening.

Townsend, a scholar-football player praised for his leadership qualities, accepted the Woodmen of the World Award, the Masonic Patriotism Award and the Lions Club Award. He, too, received a scholarship, from Louisiana Tech's School of Agriculture.

The richest award of the night went to Beth Holland, who received a $1,000 scholarship donated by the Class of 1954. Marcus Bordelon made the presentation.

Continued on Page 10

Four take top

Continued from page 1

Bordelon said class members made the decision while attending their 25th reunion on Homecoming Weekend in October. In addition to initiating the scholarship, the class planted a tree on the new campus.

Bordelon praised Miss Holland as being among the top ten members of the class, for having a high ACT test and for being class president. She was sixth in the class.

Miss Holland also won an Armand Scholarship and the Alpha Delta Kappa Award, giving annually the the Avoyelles student who plans to enter the teaching profession. She also received the LSUA Centennial Scholarship.

Miss Markey, accepted the Charmette Civic Club Award of $250, one of the $250 Armand Scholarships and the Essence Social Club Award.

Jerome Williams, the third-ranking member of the class, received one of the Armand Scholarships and the Sigma Delta Theta Award from the Delta Chi company.

Florena Moore won the Masonic Award and the $300 Magnolia Peace Officers Association Scholarship.

Miss Moore also won a college scholarship, from Northwestern State University.

Russell Holts received the Solid Citizen Award and the $25 Charmette Civic Club prize.

Four other students won awards. They were Sonja Prewett, who received the Essence Social Club award with Miss Markey; Sandra Mose, the Early Coffee Drinkers Award; and Frankie Palermo and Carolyn Boy, the American Legion Award.

Another college scholarship winner was William Taylor, who received the LSUA Alumni Federation Award.

Miss Robert, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Robert, exhibited poise and courage during her valedictory address, as a young child ran the entire length of the gym floor in front of the audience. Miss Robert smiled, stopped her remarks to allow the child to run back to the sidelines, then continued.

Using the class motto "Dawn of A New Decade" to launch her message, the valedictorian said that the decade is also new for the community, with its new high school facility. She warned fellow graduates that the road to life will be a complicated one, and that they will never again get the chance to travel the roads to high school again.

Reminding that "only through experience can we learn," she cited a poem, then noted that the choices for the new decade include new freedoms and new responsibilities, which will call for hard work and dedication.

Those who graduated "are here tonight" because they accepted their responsibilities, she said, ending with a quote from Alexander Graham Bell, reminding that "You will be certain to find something you have never seen before."

Arthur Patnaude, the fourth-ranking member of the class, thanked parents and supporters for their "sincere interest during our high school days," which "shall never be forgotten." As master of ceremonies, he opened with those comments, then turned the Pledge of Allegiance over to Melinda Drouin, the sixth-ranking student, and the invocation to the fifth-ranked student, Liz Willis.

Williams recited a poem, which was followed by Townsend's salutatory message.

Townsend mixed history with modern political opinion, opening with a quote from Samuel Webster and closing with the remark that the work ethic has "fallen drastically in the last ten years."

Townsend mentioned Webster's remarks that once referred to the fact that "high principles can be engraved on our tablets." The speaker urged his classmates to "consider what engraving we put on our tablets."

He listed the "engravings," his wishes as first being "Faith in God, faith in ourselves, faith in our fellow man and faith in the future of our country."

Listed second by Townsend was optimism "with a sense of humor."

Reminding that not all is well in the world today, Townsend said "we must be optimistic believing that things will be better, that we will have a better way of life." He also reminded that "we need a sense of humor in our daily contact with others."

His third "engraving" was "that we were willing to work," mentioning the work ethic. He closed by saying that "faith, optimism and work will be engraved on our tablets for future generations."

Ansel Given presented the Charmette award to Markey and Holts; Wayne Reynolds, the WOW to Townsend; Danny Lejeune, the Masonic to Townsend and Moore; Mrs. Jeanette Payton, the Essence to Markey and Prewett; and Mrs. Mary Armand Loewen, the Armand Scholarships to Holland, Markey, Williams and Robert.

Addie Meyer, the Coffee Drinkers to Mose; Phil Fazura, the Rotary to Robert; Henry Bordelon, the Lions to Townsend; Marcus Bordelon, the Class of 1954 Award to Holland; Lorraine Wilkins, the Belle to Robert and the ADK to Holland; Chester Hebert, the Legion to Palermo and Boy; Lillian Williams, the Magnolia to Moore; Principal Billy Hendrix, the Citizen to Holts; and Anthony Green, the Delta Chi to Williams.

Hendrix thanked the civic organizations for giving the awards, noting that students must have a 3.0 average to receive them and that 75 per cent of the awards are unknown to the faculty beforehand. He also presented the college scholarships and welcomed the guests, commenting that if basketball games draw as well, the school will have no future economic problems.

Hendrix, who began as principal when the Class of 1980 enrolled four years ago, said it is "my favorite class, because it is the best class of the last four years, with its academic leadership. I hope the classes to come will fall in their foot steps."

Hendrix, who had publicly chided the faculty during baccalaureate for not attending that ceremony, said Friday night that "I feel we have one of the finest faculties in Louisiana, we are very proud of our faculty. And if we didn't have students, the faculty wouldn't have jobs and we would have to school."

He invited the grads to return for visits and to "feel free to call on us. I hope you have a nice time tonight, whatever your endeavors are."

Only one graduate, George Anderson, missed the ceremony, due to being hospitalized. The others received their diplomas from Dr. Joe Hines and Leonard Armand, school board members. Miss Holts gave the benediction.

(Very blurry)
Transcription follows

Transcribed from The Bunkie Record May 29, 1980, via Newspapers.com

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